

Statement on the Death of Martin Slate

February 24, 1997

Hillary and I were deeply saddened to learn of the death of Marty Slate. Marty has been a dear friend since our years at Yale Law School and was the quintessential public servant.

From his days as a Freedom Rider in Mississippi to his years as a senior civil servant at the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and the Internal Revenue Service, Marty spent his entire life working to make sure our laws were fair and applied justly.

Four years ago, I was delighted when Marty answered my call to return to public service. As Executive Director of the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation, he brought a new standard of excellence to that agency. He improved the PBGC's level of customer service and its financial management, winning an Innovation in American Government Award from the John F. Kennedy School and several Vice Presidential Hammer Awards for Excellence in Government. Marty fought successfully for important new legislation that brought renewed financial stability to the Corporation, expanded pension coverage, and ensured that millions of Americans' pensions were more secure.

Hillary and I will miss him greatly. Our thoughts and prayers are with Cookie and his family on this sad day.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report on the Enlargement of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization

February 24, 1997

Dear Mr. Chairman:

Pursuant to section 1048 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1997, I transmit herewith a report on the enlargement of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

For over 50 years, successive Presidents and Congresses have maintained a firm, bipartisan consensus that the security of Europe is vital to the national security of the United States. It remains so. NATO, even

as it evolves and adapts to a changing world, remains the core of the transatlantic alliance that has served American interests for two generations.

Inclusion of new members into NATO's ranks is an indispensable element of a broader American strategy to create an undivided, democratic Europe for the 21st century. By extending the underpinnings of security beyond the arbitrary line of the Cold War, NATO can strengthen democratic and free market reforms for all of Europe, just as it has done for Western Europe in the decades since 1949. By admitting new states to the alliance, NATO will limit and help eliminate a potentially destabilizing vacuum in Europe, widening the circle of like-minded nations sharing common values and willing to shoulder common responsibilities and burdens. Already, the prospect of NATO enlargement has strengthened stability and democracy, and promoted regional cooperation among the states of Central and Eastern Europe.

The enlargement of NATO is not directed against any state; NATO does not see any nation as its enemy. By extending security and stability throughout Europe, NATO enlargement will serve the interests of all of Europe's democracies—whether they are current members, new members, or non-members. The United States looks forward to the building of a strong, dynamic relationship and unprecedented partnership between NATO and Russia.

NATO enlargement is moving ahead. NATO has agreed to hold a Summit on July 8–9 in Madrid at which one or more nations will be invited to begin negotiations on accession to the Washington Treaty; I have called for NATO to welcome new members by 1999, and NATO has accepted this goal. Continued close and bipartisan cooperation between the Congress and the executive branch are, and will remain, the keys to achieving this objective. Addition of new members to the North Atlantic alliance must be submitted to the Senate for its advice and consent, and both houses of the Congress will have to approve the resources necessary to make enlargement a reality.

I thank the Congress for the constructive role it has played in recent years to advance the enlargement of NATO. I look forward

to working with the Congress to achieve our common objective of a wider circle of security, prosperity, and common values embracing an integrated Europe and the United States.

Sincerely,

William J. Clinton

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Jesse Helms, chairman, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations; Benjamin A. Gilman, chairman, House Committee on International Relations; Strom Thurmond, chairman, Senate Committee on Armed Services; and Floyd Spence, chairman, House Committee on National Security.

Letter to National Bioethics Advisory Commission Chair Harold Shapiro on Cloning Technology Issues

February 24, 1997

Dear Dr. Shapiro:

As you know, it was reported today that researchers have developed techniques to clone sheep. This represents a remarkable scientific discovery, but one that raises important questions. While this technological advance could offer potential benefits in such areas as medical research and agriculture, it also raises serious ethical questions, particularly with respect to the possible use of this technology to clone human embryos.

Therefore, I request that the National Bioethics Advisory Commission undertake a thorough review of the legal and ethical issues associated with the use of this technology, and report back to me within ninety days with recommendations on possible federal actions to prevent its abuse.

Sincerely,

Bill Clinton

Remarks to the Democratic Business Council

February 24, 1997

Thank you very much, Tom and Carol. Chairman Grossman and Alan Solomont and Paul DeNino, thank you for taking on this important work.

Let me begin by thanking all of you for being here tonight and for your support, for

the things that you said earlier, and your high hopes for our country. And let me remind you that we are involved in an extraordinary endeavor with a great opportunity. In the last 4 years we changed the economic policy of this country, and we now are committed to investing in our people, expanding our trade, and balancing our budget. And the consequences have been truly extraordinary.

In the last 4 years, for the first time ever in one Presidential administration, we had 11½ million more jobs and record numbers of new businesses in every single year. The so-called misery index is the combined rates of unemployment and inflation. It's the lowest it has been in America since the 1960's. And every one of you who supported our efforts, who fought for our policies, who stood up for what we are trying to do played a role in that, and you should be proud of that.

We changed the direction of social policy in this country, putting family and community at the center of our concerns and substituting action for rhetoric. And that's one of the reasons, thanks for the crime bill, that we've had years of declining crime now and people actually can believe that their streets can be made safe for their children; one of the reasons we've had the largest decline in welfare rolls in the history of the United States.

We now have—I was telling the folks at the table tonight, from 1972 to 1989, it was an average of 4.8 percent of the American people on public assistance. When I took office there were almost 5½ percent of the people on welfare. Today, it's 4.6, lower than the average since 1972 and going down.

And the only thing I would ask you is, any one of you—my friend Stan Chesley has already hired two people off the welfare rolls. We have to set an example. We can't just exhort people. We now have to hire one million people from welfare to work in the next 4 years to meet the targets of the welfare reform law. Meeting the target of the welfare reform law means requiring people who can work to work but not cutting anybody off public assistance who is honestly committed to supporting her children and cannot find a job. So we changed the law. Now we have to do our part.